

14 June 2002

English only

**Eighth United Nations Conference on the
Standardization of Geographical Names**

Berlin, 27 August-5 September 2002

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries
and on the progress made in the standardization of
geographical names since the Seventh Conference**

National report of Italy

Submitted by Italy**

* E/CONF.94/1.

** Prepared by Sabato Rainone, Chief, Geographic Section of the Italian Defence General Staff.

1. Summary.

National Report reflects the on going activities in the sector of interest which, with the contribution of renowned experts of the academic world, are conceived in order to normalise the geographical names in Italy, always taking in due account the suggestions issued by UNGEGN.

2. Background information.

In Italy a real and well defined authority concerning toponyms does not exist. Currently the task of carrying out the revision of the official toponyms is given to a special Committee chaired by the Director of the Military Geographic Institute, in force of the law n. 605 dated June 8th 1949. It happens within a normative context (law n. 68 dated February 1960) which foresees 5 national cartographic agencies and that, besides, has given to Regions and other local Entities the capability to take decision on the matter, though limited to administrative names, according to the Presidential Decree n.1 dated January 14th 1972.

3. Goals and national programmes.

Taking into account the UN determinations concerning the Normalisation of Geographical Names and considered the specific national situation, besides the recent evolution of the related regulations, Italy has operated in order to get the following goals:

- update of the paper "Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and Other Editors";
- publication of the "Concise Gazetteer of Italian Geographical Names";
- production of the Italian exonym inventory;
- realisation of the project "Multilingual glossary of geographical features";
- production and distribution of the "UNGEGN Brochure";
- WEB site creation for the diffusion at national and international level of the main issues and aspects concerning the geographical names normalisation of the sector.

4. Problems, solutions and achievements during the reporting period.

The achievement of the above said objectives has been obtained within an untypical normative context, which is that described in the previous paragraph 2.

As for the goals indicated during the last UNGEGN conferences and, in particular, during the period started from the last UNGEGN 7th Meeting till nowadays, the Italian activity in the sector has been developed carrying out the below listed initiatives:

– **"Toponymic Guidelines for Map Editors and Other Editors"**.

This document, presented at the 7th UNGEGN Conference, as document E/Conf. 91/CRP.20, has been integrated and updated. In particular the colours maps indicating the national administrative borders of Regions and Provinces have been inserted and the paragraphs regarding "minority languages" and "names authority and names standardisation" have also been updated, according to the law n. 482 / 1999, which has partially changes the normative frame of the geographical names.

It is proper to remember that the Italian "Toponymic Guidelines" had been edited by Prof. Sandro TONIOLO and by him presented within the 5th Conference (Montreal, 1897).

The integrations and modifications concerning the text discussed during the 7th Conference will be illustrated with a special paper;

- **“Concise Gazetteer of Italian Geographical Names”**.
This gazetteer has been produced by the Military Geographical Institute according to the map at scale 1: 1000K “World 1301”; it will be illustrated during the Conference with the presentation of a special paper.
- **Exonims**.
An inventory of the “Main Italian Exonyms of European Endonyms” has been produced by Prof. Sandro TONIOLO and has been published on the IGM magazine “L’Universo” (n. 2/2001). Thanks to the support of the RHD delegates the foreword of the paper has been translated into English, French and Spanish.
Also this paper will be presented during the Conference.
- **“Multilingual Glossary of Geographical Features”**.
This document could be of great help for all the map and geoproduct creators, since it foresees the main geographical elements normally used and their related names in six languages. Its realisation has been possible thanks to a previous draft produced by General Maurizio PAMPALONI and the appreciated contribution of the RHD experts.
- **UNGEEN Brochure**.
Edited within IGM, has been printed the UNGEEN Brochure in Italian language and it has been distributed within universities, schools, research centres, libraries and public geographical institutions.
- **WEB site**.
It will soon be created an official web page of IGM, which will present the UN initiatives as for the standardisation of geographical names, the tasks and the UNGEEN activities and the obtained goals within Italy.

5. Conclusions.

Italy is fully aware of the importance of the geographical names standardisation at international level and participates always with more attention in the development of the UN activities in the sector.

It is proper to stress that, during the period passed since the 7th Conference, this activity has mainly been carried out by the Military Geographic Institute which, besides, since the year 2000 has taken the responsibility of the UNGEEN / RHD Presidency, due to its role of National Mapping Agency, but also due to the related task given by the above said law dated 1949. Last but not least it has to be stressed that contributions of well known scholars of universities and other institutions have been of valuable and very much appreciated help.
